



Peabody Special Education Parent Advisory Council Bylaws

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this self-governed organization shall be the Peabody Special Education Parent/Family Advisory Council, also known as the Peabody SEPAC.

ARTICLE II: MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Peabody Special Education Parent Advisory Council is to provide education and information to parents/guardians/caregivers and the broader community on special education issues and services, to establish more understanding of, respect for, and support of special education, and to work with the Peabody School District to ensure that students' needs are met. The Peabody SEPAC derives its statutory authority from **Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71B, Section 3**, and its implementing regulation, **603 CMR 28.03(4)**.

Massachusetts law requires each school district to establish a districtwide parent advisory council (PAC) to advise the district on matters pertaining to the education and safety of students with disabilities and to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the district's special education programs.

The district shall, in cooperation with the SEPAC and pursuant to **603 CMR 28.03(1)(a)(4)**, conduct at least one annual workshop within the district on the rights of students and their parents and guardians under state and federal special education laws.

ARTICLE III: PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

The mission of the Peabody Public School (PPS) Special Education Parent/Family Advisory Council (SEPAC) is to work towards the understanding of, respect for, support of, and appropriate education for all children with disabilities in the PPS community. Our work aims to incorporate equitable access and participation within the SEPAC across all backgrounds, languages, and disability types. To that end, the Peabody SEPAC will:

1. Advise the School Committee and Director of Special Education on matters that pertain to the education, health, and safety of students with disabilities by providing direct family input, review, and feedback [603 CMR 28:07(4)].
2. Meet regularly with school officials to advise and participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the district's special education programs (in accordance with 603 CMR 28:07 (4)). This includes but is not excluded to providing input to the development of policy and procedures

as well as parent, teacher, and community member training. Advising and participating shall include development and review of the Coordinated Program Reviews and Mid-cycle Reviews prior to submission to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

3. Organize a network of parents, guardians, and educational surrogates—including but not limited to parents of children with disabilities—and provide a forum to share information and discuss matters regarding children with disabilities. This will include offering a network of support for parents featuring access to relevant information, workshops, training, forums, and community resources, and sharing timely information with the membership and the community in Peabody, as well as PPS administration and the School Committee.
4. Promote communication between Peabody SEPAC members and community, state, and national organizations, local and state legislators, and other similar groups, with the goal of advancing policies and regulations that foster understanding, acceptance, and inclusion of children with disabilities.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

General Membership shall be open to all parents, guardians, caregivers, and educational surrogates of children with a disability residing in Peabody, MA. While General Membership is limited to the above, the Peabody SEPAC welcomes participation from all interested parties, caregivers, and community members, including educators and allies, as non-voting members.

Voting Membership is required to vote in annual officer elections and any other business that comes before any Peabody SEPAC meeting. Voting membership is open to any general member who:

1. is a parent, guardian, caregiver, or educational surrogate of a child, ages 3-22, with disabilities residing in Peabody, MA with or without an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan and
2. who has attended and signed in at least two (2) previous meetings of the Peabody SEPAC in their entirety during the past twelve (12) months before the date of the vote. Attendance at meetings may be in person or remote.

ARTICLE V. CONFIDENTIALITY

Section One: For the purpose of confidentiality, the school district does not share the email addresses of families receiving special education services with the SEPAC. If a parent wishes to be included in the SEPAC mailing list, parents should email the SEPAC at PSEPAC@gmail.com with their request. All information will be kept private and used only for SEPAC purposes.

Section Two: Any other interested parties who would like to be included in the SEPAC mailing list should email the SEPAC at PSEPAC@gmail.com with their request. All information will be kept private and used only for SEPAC purposes.

Section Three: SEPAC members shall not disclose personally identifiable student information without consent, consistent with applicable privacy laws

ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS

1. The SEPAC shall plan to hold at least four regular meetings each year, and the dates of those meetings shall be determined annually by the Executive Board.
2. Additional meetings may be held on an as-needed basis as determined by the membership.
3. All meetings shall be announced to all SEPAC members and notice given to the entire community.
4. Minutes of all meetings shall be kept by the Secretary.

ARTICLE VII: QUORUM AND VOTING PROCEDURES

1. Elections are for filling an office position. Votes are for removing personnel from an office position.
2. The SEPAC shall hold a general election for all offices. Officers may also resign or be removed from office. If an office becomes vacant for any reason, the President shall appoint an Interim Officer, and an election to fill the vacancy shall be held no later than the next meeting. The President shall list the election on the meeting agenda along with the names of the nominees.
3. Nominations for Officers shall be made in advance of the election meeting. Any member may make a nomination, and a member may nominate themselves.
4. Any member may request a vote to remove an officer from office. The requests must be sent to the President or Secretary in writing. The request must include the cause or justification for removal, which shall be shared with the voters. The President will add the vote to the agenda for the next meeting.
5. Votes shall be cast by a show of hands.
6. Any voting member of SEPAC is entitled to voting privileges. Each member's vote has equal weight.
7. Members who cannot attend a voting meeting may arrange to submit their vote to the Secretary in writing, in advance of the meeting.
8. A minimum of three voting members is required at a meeting to constitute a quorum for the purpose of voting.
9. When a quorum is present at any meeting, a majority of the votes cast by voting members present shall decide the matter at hand.

ARTICLE VIII: OFFICERS, ELECTIONS AND DUTIES

1. The Executive Board of the Peabody SEPAC shall be composed of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Membership Coordinator, Events Coordinator, and Technology Coordinator. All Executive Board members shall be voting members of the SEPAC. Officers may, from time to time, delegate any of their duties to another officer. If not all positions are filled, officers will share responsibilities as needed and will make their best effort towards fulfilling the mission of the Peabody SEPAC.
2. Nominations of candidates for officers for the following year shall be requested from the membership by the President or Secretary in April or May of each year. Nominations may also occur at the beginning of the final meeting of the school year at which the candidate(s) are present.
3. To avoid conflict of interest, no officer shall be an employee of the Peabody School District.
4. Officers shall be elected at the Annual Meeting by a majority of votes cast by a quorum.
5. Each elected officer shall hold office for a term of one year (July 1 through June 30) and may be re-elected to such office in any subsequent year.
6. An officer may resign by giving notice in writing to the President or Vice President of the SEPAC. In the event of a resignation or removal from office, the voting membership shall hold an election for a successor to fill an unexpired term.
7. One person may hold more than one office.
8. If no person is holding an officer position, the School District shall assume the duty of seeking nominees and conducting the nomination of at least one officer to serve.

Section Two: Duties of Officers

1. President / Vice President

- The President shall serve as the presiding officer of all regular and special meetings of SEPAC. In the absence of the President, the Vice President shall be the presiding officer of meetings. If the position of Vice President is vacant, or the Vice President is unable to serve, the President may appoint any other member to act as presiding officer of any meeting.

Other duties of the President and Vice President shall include:

- Drafting the agenda for each general meeting
- Recommending the creation of any committee or sub-committee
- Providing support to other officers
- Monitoring compliance with the Bylaws and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Regulations
- Acting as liaison with district and school officials and representatives, including the Special Education Administrator, the School Committee, the Superintendent, the Principals, and the Educators.

- Lead efforts to advise the district on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities.
- Coordinating regular meetings with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school district's special education programs.
- Share periodic reports with the Administration regarding Peabody SEPAC activities and needs
- Identifying and pursuing ways to collaborate on common goals.
- Funneling parent feedback from SEPAC to the Special Education Administrator and School Committee.
- Acting as liaison between parents/guardians/caregivers of students with disabilities or suspected disabilities and the Administrator of Special Education.
- Present updates about the SEPAC to the school committee no less than twice annually
- Transitioning knowledge and expertise to the next President or Vice President upon end of term
- Providing seven (7) days' notice to the Special Education Administrator if a member requires access to interpreter services.

2. Secretary

- Drafting general meeting minutes.
- Counting and recording all vote results
- Responsible for public comment forms at meetings.
- Assist board members as appropriate and perform additional responsibilities as needed.

3. Membership Coordinator

- Leading efforts to encourage parents to get more involved in the SEPAC
- Coordinating efforts to recruit parents from each school, program, and out-of-district placements to become members
- Encouraging and/or enabling networking between members (support groups)
- Working with Events Coordinator to plan social events for parents
- Coordinating communication to non-English speaking parents of children on IEP's or 504's

4. Events Coordinator

- Leading event planning and publicity
- Coordinating event logistics
- Recruiting assistance from membership and community

5. Communications/Technology Coordinator

- Publicizing events and meetings to the general public
- Posting the events to the SEPAC website and Facebook page
- Overseeing, maintaining, and/or improving the SEPAC website and newsletter.

ARTICLE IX: PARENT/GUARDIAN LIASIONS

Section One: PURPOSE

1. School Parent/Guardian Liaisons support communication, outreach, and inclusion efforts within district schools and programs.
2. Liaisons serve in advisory and representative capacities and are considered General members but are not Officers unless separately elected to an Officer position.
3. Each school may have up to three (3) Liaison representatives.

Section Two: DUTIES OF LIASIONS

1. Establish and maintain a SEPAC presence at their assigned school or program (e.g., information tables at open houses, listings in directories, informational materials at school offices, or SEPAC-sponsored events).
2. Publicize SEPAC meetings and activities within their school and community.
3. Meet periodically with school PTOs, School Councils, or similar groups, as appropriate.
4. Promote inclusion, accommodation, and acceptance of students with disabilities.
5. Encourage understanding of the neurodivergent community.
6. Gather and communicate caregiver feedback or concerns to SEPAC leadership and report, as appropriate, at general meetings.

ARTICLE X: CHANGES TO BYLAWS

Section One: ADOPTION, REPEAL OR AMENDMENT

1. These Bylaws may be adopted, repealed or amended at any SEPAC meeting, provided that the proposed action is submitted in writing to all SEPAC members at least 5 calendar days prior to the meeting scheduled for that purpose.
2. Proposed changes to these Bylaws may be adopted by a majority vote of voting members at such meetings scheduled for that purpose, at which a quorum is present

Date of Adoption : March 31, 2026

